

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 26
Issue 59
May 2018

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



Birding & Travels in Ethiopia

Ron Force

Please join us as Palouse Audubon Society president Ron Force presents an overview of his travel through Ethiopia in February of 2017, in a program entitled "Ethiopia, the Roof of Africa."

Ron will be highlighting the birds and wildlife he saw, as well as the scenery and natural history.

Ethiopia is a country of contrasts: it contains some of the highest terrain in Africa and some of the lowest elevations. It boasts ancient empires that dominated the Horn of Africa and trade with the Middle East. Ethiopians founded and still practice some of the oldest Christian traditions (including churches carved from solid rock by angels, as the legend relates) and founded monasteries in the Middle Ages that contain precious artifacts. It was the only African country never to be colonized, but struggled against war and famine in the 20th century.

Its high plateaus and low Rift Valley lakes provide a range of habitats for rare mammals, birds, and plants, semi-protected in national parks and preserves. Please join us for this exciting program by Ron Force. The program is free and open to the public.



Superb Starling



Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill

Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:
Wednesday May 9 at 7:30 p.m. Social get-together at 7:00

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Membership Report

by Dave Plemons

A big welcome to our new nesters: Jane Banks, Alexis Lucey, Kenneth Penner, Mary Marsh and Kris Wilson.

Many thanks to our returning nesters: Pearl & Howard Bouchard, Marilyn Burgis, Cynthia & James Cappello, Michael & Pam Dixson, Greg Gordon, Janet Grossman, Chuck Kerkering, Lisa Langelier, Kathy Larrabee, Gary Lee, Susan Orłowski, John Stuart & Carol Mack, & Kris Wilson.

Many nesters chose to not receive a hard copy of the Pygmy Owl. If you could help us reduce costs and save paper & energy by switching to our electronic full color publication, please contact me. You already have access on the Spokane Audubon WebSite under the tab: Members Only. To receive a personal PDF copy for your own file we will need your Email address. Mine is davep_acer@msn.com. I cannot make out correctly some Email addresses. Legibility is critical.

BIRDS UNDER THREAT

Interior Secretary Zinke has suggested changes to the Migratory Bird Act that would hold industry blameless in the death of birds. Now Congress is moving quickly to gut the Endangered Species Act, American's strongest and most important law for protecting wildlife.

The Endangered Species Act has a proven track record of success in providing a safety net that protects our most vulnerable wildlife. It has prevented 99 percent of the species under its care from going extinct, including America's symbol, the Bald Eagle. We should allow this critical law to continue to protect wildlife for future generations, not undermine it.

Please ask your members of Congress to oppose efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

The Pygmy Owl deadline:
May 25, 2018

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

With unseasonably warm and dry weather, birding has been a delightful experience, even if the usual number of rare sightings is slightly down for this year. Just as you receive this newsletter, the first BIG wave of songbird migrants should be back. Already Orange-crowned, Nashville, and Yellow-rumped Warblers have arrived as I type and more are on the way! As well, Black-necked Stilts have made an impressive showing this Spring, with sightings at a dozen or more locations around the region and counts of up to 51 birds!

Snow Goose: Cusick (3/31-TL); Moscow (4/2-CL); Cottonwood (4/5-CJ); Sprague (4/8-4/21-JI) Colville (4/13-WC); Saltese (4/12); Canyon Rd. Mash (EP-4/14); Ewan (4/14-RB); Sandpoint (4/14-RDC); Trestle Creek (4/14-ER); Philleo Lake (4/15-22-JI); Priest Lake (4/15-MaB); Vassar (4/22-CL); Sandpoint (4/24-RDC)

Ross's Goose: Philleo Lake (4/13-JI)

Great Gray Owl: Woodland (4/1-JW)

Greater White-fronted Goose: Genesee (3/31-CL); Turnbull NWR (4/2-KT); Spokane (4/12-JI); Reardan (4/22-SA)

Northern Goshawk: Steptoe Butte (4/9-MH)

American Avocet: Trestle Creek (4/24-RDC)

Red-necked Phalarope: Sprague (4/8-JI) – Earliest recording sighting in WA!

Blue Jay: Spokane (3/22-TO); Viola (4/1-NW)

Loggerhead Shrike: Deer Park (4/14-JI) – Rare in Spokane Co.

White-throated Sparrow: Rice (4/17-TD)

Harris's Sparrow: Ephrata (3/29-MY)

Observers: SA-Spokane Audubon; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MaB-Matt Butler; CB-Carl Barrentine; DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; MaC-Marlene Cashen; JC-Jonathan Creel; SC-Stacy Crist; WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; KD-Kas Dumroese; TD-Tim Durnell; MF-Marian Frobe; MiF-Michael Fulton; LH-Lindell Haggin; JH-John Hanna; FH-Fran Haywood; DH-Dave Holick; MH-Michael Hobbs; JI-Jon Isacoff; CJ-Craig Johnson; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; RK-Russ Koppendrayner; GL-Greg Lambeth; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; TM-Travis Mangione; CM-Curtis Mahon; NM-Nancy Miller; TO-Tim O'Brien; EP-Eric Pratt; ER-Eric Rassmussen; JR-Jan Reynolds; JR-Jethro Runco; ShS-Shane Sater; SS-Sandy Schreven; CS-Charles Swift; NT-Norma Trefry; DW-Doug Ward; NW-Nancy Williams; JW-Janis Woolbright; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young

Loggerhead Shrike
photo by Kim Thorburn



Wenas Audubon Campout

You're invited to attend a celebration of birds, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern Washington.

The annual Wenas Audubon Campout takes place on Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-28) at the Wenas Creek Campground (SW of Ellensburg).

This casual and friendly gathering offers a variety of activities, including birding field trips, wildflower walks, field sketching, owl prowls, and campfire presentations. You do not need to be an Audubon member to attend. All are welcome.

Visit the Wenas Audubon website (www.wenasaudubon.org) for directions, an outline of field trips and programming, and more information (2018 program coming soon). Pre-registration is not required. The campout is free and open to all ages; however, donations are encouraged. Every vehicle must display a Washington State Discover Pass (<http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/>).



Wenas Wildlife Area
courtesy WDFW

MISSION: EQUIP HUTTON SETTLEMENT STUDENTS TO SEE BIRDS

by Joyce Alonso

Spring is here FINALLY...I think! It's a great time of year to watch and learn about birds. Recently Sally English and I met with Gabe Thompson, a young, outdoor-loving houseparent at the Hutton Settlement in the Spokane Valley. He is really excited about teaching his kids about the birds that abound on that property (where, with permission, we've done part of the Christmas Count for many years).

Gabe already has acquired several sets of binoculars...of the very inexpensive kind that one can use to see a bird 10 feet away! Sally and I think they need equipment that will contribute to their success instead of causing frustration...so I'm asking our members to come up with some better ones. I hope that some of you have a pair of functioning 7 X 35 starter binocs stashed somewhere in your house. Thanks to Ed and Jan Reynolds' generosity, we have one pair so far. Please call me (939-0120) or e-mail (jbalonso3@msn.com) if you have anything to contribute (\$\$\$ certainly would be accepted also!). I'm happy to pick them up and deliver them.



HUTTON SETTLEMENT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD OF CARE

The Hutton Settlement nurtures, educates and prepares children who are in need of a safe and healthy home. It is our vision that, through excellence in residential care and family engagement, the Hutton Settlement will empower each child to lead an independent and fulfilled life of value and contribution.

2019 Spokane Audubon Calendar Photograph Contest Guidelines

Submission Period: May 1 – May 31, 2018

Beginning May 1st submit photos to:

sauduboncalendar@gmail.com



Northern Pygmy Owl, from the 2015 calendar
Tom Munson photographer



Black-necked Stilts, from the 2016 calendar
Bea Harrison photographer

Eligibility Requirements

- Spokane Audubon Society member in good standing.
- Submit electronically up to three 9.25” wide by 6.75” height photographs. The photographs shall not have the © symbol with the photographer’s name or other inserted script.
- Submissions should be 96 ppi. Those selected will need to resubmit (on CD) at 300ppi.
- If the photographer has photograph(s) selected, she/he maintains copyright and agrees to provide perpetual use of the photograph(s) to Spokane Audubon Society for the calendar and other promotional and educational purposes.
- Photos must be of birds which can be found in Eastern Washington but the photo does not have to have been taken in Eastern Washington.

Call for entries

- Photographers may submit entries starting Monday, May 1st. The deadline is Wednesday May 31st.
- No entries will be accepted after May 31st.
- Unselected photographs from previous years will not be submitted automatically for future years’ calendars. The photographer may resubmit photos not previously selected.

Judging and Selection

- Selection will be made by a panel of three to five impartial judges, at least one of whom is a Spokane Audubon Society board member or committee chair. It is preferred that some panel members have moderately advanced bird identification skills and experience with bird photography.
- Photographers who submit entries cannot be judges.
- The bird must be the focus of the photograph. Preference is given to unusual species and hard-to-see species or behaviors.
- Judging criteria are photo composition and quality.
- Submissions must comply with size requirements.
- The panel will select 14 photographs for each calendar month and additional photographs which may be used in smaller form on the pages.
- Following selection, entrants will be notified of the decisions.

Publication

- Each photograph will be published with the common name of the bird species and © with the name of the photographer.
- Please include the location where the photograph was taken.

Turnbull NWR/Cheney MayFest

May 12, 2018



Floods, Flowers, and Feathers

MayFest Activities-Cheney

Booths and Displays: (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Ducks Unlimited
EWU - Snyamcut Residence Hall
EWU Biology Dept.
Friends of Turnbull
Ice Age Floods Institute,
Cheney-Spokane Chapter
National Park Service
Spokane County Water Resources
Turnbull NWR Animal Tracks
West Plains Beekeepers
...and many more!

Turnbull NWR Activities (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Bird & Wildflower Walks
Bird Banding Demonstration
Bluebird Nest Box - Walk & Talk
Can You Find That Bird? Scavenger Hunt
EWU mosquito/tick activity
EWU - Nature walk with demonstration of
refuge small mammals
Fire Fighting Demonstration
Ice Age Floods Institute Geology Tour
Live Birds of Prey
Photography Talk
Pond Life

All activities are free

Details/Times: www.fws.gov/refuge/turnbull

American kestrel *Falco sparverius*

by Lisa Langelier

If I were reborn as a bird, I'd be an American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*). Some of my best features would be grace, speed, and precision, not to mention colorful good looks. Although I may be one of the smallest species in the *Falco* genus, averaging about four ounces, I am gutsy and intrepid. And sometimes noisy, calling shrilly "klee, klee, klee," when alarmed or excited.

I live in open country, along forest edges, agricultural fields, and parks, hunting rodents, insects, small birds (Eurasian starlings, house sparrows), and an earthworm or two. My range extends from tree line in Alaska and Canada south to the tip of South America. Cavities created by woodpeckers in trees make my ideal nest but I'll use holes in poles, buildings, and nest boxes. Sometimes I vie for cavities with woodpeckers, starlings, squirrels, and screech owls.

I'm like a small jet, fast; but I love to hover while hunting to get the best view of my potential prey. Upon landing, I often pump my tail up and down. You'll often see me perched in the open, alone.

Two black facial stripes, one below my brown eye and a parallel stripe behind my white cheek, mark my face. I am about the size of a mourning dove, although females are 10 to 15 percent larger than males. Males usually have a slate-colored crown, rusty back with black bars, slate-gray wing coverts, and a rufous tail with a black band tipped in white. Females are rusty brown with black bars on the back and tail. Our underparts are buffy to orange with brown spots or speckles.

Okay, the ruse is up. I am not now and probably never will be a kestrel. But I sure liked the idea of hunting house sparrows and European starlings!

Conservation concern for kestrels is warranted. USGS Breeding Bird Survey data indicate that American kestrels have declined by 50 percent between 1966 and 2015 in some locations, particularly in northeastern states, while western populations appear more stable, with the exception of California and parts of Oregon. Christmas Bird

Counts from Washington State from 1980 through 2016 show fairly stable kestrel numbers. Spokane CBC counts had an average of six American kestrels during the same years, with only one kestrel counted in 1981, 1990, 1993, 2013 and a maximum of 13 counted in 1995 and 2004. In 2012, The Peregrine Fund started the American Kestrel Partnership (<https://kestrel.peregrinefund.org/>) joining interested citizens and scientists in assessing kestrel populations and promoting kestrel conservation. Keep your eyes open for this rusty feathered ace, the American kestrel.



Photos courtesy of Tom Munson

Upcoming Field Trips

For times, meeting places, etc., please go to our website: spokaneaudubon.org

May 12, 2018, Saturday Slavin Ranch Wetland Trip
Leader: Alan McCoy

Townsend's solitaire, gray flycatcher, Cassin's vireo and more

Leader: Kim Thorburn

465-3025/kthorburn@msn.com

May 12, 2018, Saturday Turnbull NWR. Flood, Flowers, Feathers festival.

May 26-28, 2018 Wenas Audubon Campout

May 19, 2018, Saturday Turnbull Wildlife Refuge Family Trip

Leaders: Sandy & Richard Sollie

June 2, 2018 Beginning Bird Watching

Sponsored by Friends of Turnbull & Spokane Audubon

<http://fotnwr.org/activities.html>

May 26, 2018. Saturday. Riverside State Park.

It will involve hiking. We will see dry forest song birds: canyon, Pacific, Bewick's and house wrens, lazuli bunting, Nashville and yellow-rumped warblers,

Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form

Local Membership Dues:

Individual: \$20/year _____

Couple & Family: \$25/year _____

Student: \$10/year _____

Lifetime: \$300 _____

National Membership Dues: \$35/year _____

Individual + National Dues: \$55/year _____

Couple + National Dues: \$60/year _____

Your local membership provides you with *The Pygmy Owl* and supports your local chapter's many conservation and education activities. You will also be eligible for website privileges.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



Please make check payable to:

Spokane Audubon Society

Send this form and your check to:

Audubon Membership

Attn: Dave Plemons

1224 W. Riverside #1101

Spokane, WA 99201

Current members may renew memberships from our web site::

<http://spokaneaudubon.org>

Receiving duplicate newsletters? Errors or other changes needed on your mailing label? Contact Dave Plemons at davep_nublado@me.com, or 413-1524.



The Pygmy Owl
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April 2018

To:

The Spokane Audubon Society provides resources and services to educate people about birds, wildlife, and the importance of habitats, and to advocate and support public policies and actions that conserve and restore wildlife habitats.

Visit our website: <http://spokaneaudubon.org>

Directions to the General Meeting:

*Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building
 2117 E. North Crescent Avenue*

To get to Riverview Retirement Community:

From West Spokane & South Hill

- I-90 East to Exit 281 toward US-2 E/US-395 N/Newport/Colville
- Follow US-2 E/US-395 N to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From Spokane Valley

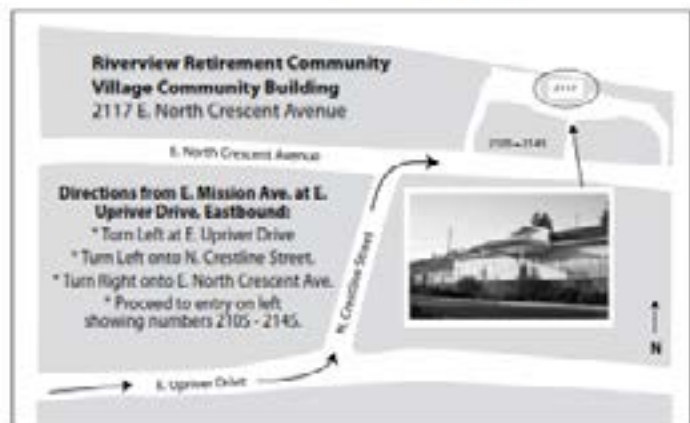
- I-90 West to Exit 282A
- Follow N. Hamilton St. to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From North Spokane

- Take US-395 S to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

Once you're on E. Upriver Drive (see map below):

- Follow E. Upriver Drive to N. Crestline Street
- Turn Left at N. Crestline Street
- Turn Right on E. North Crescent Drive
- Proceed to entry on left showing numbers 2105-2145



Limited parking is available by the Village Community Building. Overflow parking is along E. North Crescent Ave.

BirdNote can also be heard on KEWU 89.5 FM 8 a.m. daily

